DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 320 214 EA 021 832

AUTHOR Berry, James E.; And Others
TITLE Characteristics and Considerations for Change--Implementing Excellence and Accountability.
PUB DATE Mar 90
NOTE 15p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Accountability; *Change Strategies; *Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Excellence in Education; *Pilot Projects
IDENTIFIERS *Governeur Central School District NY

ABSTRACT

The Excellence and Accountability pilot program sponsored by the New York State Education Department was an opportunity for the Governeur Central School District to redefine decision-making in regard to teaching and learning. The program, which is moving school management closer to the source of learning (the teacher), is a process of change resulting from policies, behaviors, and attitudes shaping the learning environment. This report discusses the characteristics and considerations for change, beginning with six assumptions concerning change as a highly personalized experience. The traditional justification for bureaucratic organization of schools has been that a smooth-running school facilitates learning. However, when efficiency begins to control the school's educational practice, teachers react in ways that reduce educational quality rather than enhance it. In fact, teachers tend to control their students in much the same way as they are controlled by administrators. The Excellence and Accountability program has six components: annual public reporting, school building registration/registration review, district standards of excellence, a 5-year school education plan, an independent review of education plan, and a strategy for coordinating people. The characteristics of change that must be implemented and evaluated within the context of improving school systems include administrative vision and leadership, leadership through empowerment and organizational teaming, goal definition, and the management of incremental change. A change quotient rating scale is appended. (10 references) (MLH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED320214

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHANGE--

IMPLEMENTING EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gary J. Buehler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

James E. Berry, Ed.D.
Project Director for EAP

Gary J. Buehler, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Mary Margaret Small, Ed.D.
Director of Instruction

Gouverneur Central School District

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EA021832

Characteristics and Considerations for Change--

Implementing Excellence and Accountability

The Excellence and Accountability pilot program sponsored by the New York State Education Department was an opportunity for the Gouverneur Central School District to redefine decision making in regard to teaching and learning. The school district is moving the process of school operation, as it impacts student achievement, closer to the source of learning--the teacher. This program is a process of change resulting from policies, behaviors, and attitudes that shape the learning environment.

The change process in the Gouverneur Central School District encounters the challenge of change common to all bureaucratic organizations. While many school districts have developed skills in introducing a change such as Effective Schools, often little emphasis is put on the process elements that are characterisitics for incorporating a change in school systems. Looking at the elements of change it is important to design strategies that can make a diffence as to whether staff accept or feel comfortable with change, or whether they reject it and never come to terms with it in a fruitful way.

> Change requires exchanging something old for something new. It is important to recognize that all change requires exchange. People have to unlearn and relearn, exchange power for status, and exchange old norms and values for new norms and values. These changes are often frightening and threatening while at the same time potentially stimulating and providers of new hope. One must recognize the nature of exchanges; there are costs and benefits which must ultimately balance in favor of the benefits side.[1]

Underlying the change process are factors that one must consider. As the issue of promoting a systematic and prolonged change process is introduced to a school system some basic tenets must be considered. The following assumptions apply to the issue of change:

1.Change is a process, not an event. Introducing change is the event; working with implementing a change involves a process.

2.Change is made by individuals (usually teachers), not institutions; and these individuals should be the primary focus of efforts to support change.

3.Change is a highly personal experience; people respond differently. Considering the questions, needs, and experiences of individuals involved in change can make a difference in the success of their work with the change.

4.There are identifiable natural "stages" to the change process as experienced by individuals. Understanding these changes can be helpful in facilitating, planning for, and evaluating the progress of change.

5.Change takes time. Often not enough time is given to the needs of individuals in a process before some outcomes are expected.

6.Problems should be solved and decisions made at the lowest level within the organization. (Teachers tend to know the problems best.)

These assumptions are a starting point for initiating change at the building level. For it is here that much of the educational research and rhetoric of the last twenty years has been focused.

School improvement efforts since "A Nation At Risk" have pointed to the need to restructure our schools. These same school improvement efforts have not, however, addressed the real elements of change. There must be a focus upon restructuring bureaucracy and people. Schools are bureaucratic, and, by nature resistant to change. "The traditional justification for the bureaucratic organization of schools has been that a smooth-running school facilitates learning. But when attention to 'smooth running' begins to control the educational practice in a school, teachers react in ways that reduce educational quality rather than enhance it. In fact, teachers tend to control their students in much the same way as they are controlled by administrators.[2]

The Excellence and Accountability Program has five components --annual public reporting, school building registration/registration review, district standards of excellence, five year school education plan and independent review of education plan. The unstated component is the ability of the organization to coordinate people. Introducing the change is the event; working with staff implementing the change over time is the process. This process "has the objective of developing the ability of the organization to coordinate people, not technology, to achieve productivity. In part, this involves developing people's skills, but in part it also involves the creation of new structures, incentives and a new philosophy

of management.[3] When there is incentive to change and a system that promotes meaningful contributions by teachers and administrators schools become dynamic and productive. Schools evolve into institutions that continually perpetuate and renew staff and administration. More importantly, children benefit from this institutional quality.

The characteristics of change that must be implemented and evaluated within the context of improving school systems cannot be said to be definitive. These characterisitics are, however, practical and necessary conditions for coordinating people to be more productive within the schools. They include:

1.administrative vision and leadership;

2.leadership through empowerment and organizational teaming;

3.goal definition;

4.the management of incremental change.

Administrative Vision and Leadership

Leadership has taken on a new meaning in schools. In schools a leader vests authority with decision makers--teachers--to strive toward achieving the goals of the organization. The role of the leader becomes that of a change facilitator. The superintendent, principals, vice principals and central office administrators must define their roles in regard to the following characteristics:

-- Vision and Goal-Setting.

-- Structuring a School as a Workplace.

-- Managing Change.

-- Collaborating and Delegating.

-- Decision Making.

--Guiding and Supporting[4]

Bennis and Nanus describe leadership as the ability to follow. School administration is being redefined becuse this emerging role makes sense and produces results.

> [Leaders] empower others to translate intention into reality and sustatin it. This does not mean that leaders must relinquish power, or that followers must continually challenge authority. It does mean that power must become a unit of exchange--an active, changing token in creative, productive, and communicative transactions. Effective leaders will ultimately reap the human harvest of their efforts by the simple action of power's reciprocal: empowerment . . . The essential thing in organizational leadership is that the leader's style pulls rather than pushes people on. A pull style of influence works by attracting and energizing people to an exciting vision of the future. It motivates by identification, rather than through rewards and punishments. [Leaders] articulate and embody the ideals toward which the organization is striving. They enroll themselves (and others) in a vision of that ideal as attainable and worthy.[5]

A fundamental change, or paradigm shift, in the way school systems function is how an administration contributes to the organization. Administration must, in words and actions, make school level improvement occur by empowering teachers as contributing resources. Closest to the source of learning is the teacher. Closest to the problems associated with learning is, as well, the teacher.

Teachers As Decision Makers Through Organizational Teaming

Through cooperative effort, schools must enlist teachers as decision makers through organizational teaming. Teacher decision making is collaborative decision making with all of the stake holders in the school system. It is leadership and supervision blended together in demonstrated participatory governance . . . it is teacher empowerment.[6]

Teacher decision making is empowerment, the teaming of teachers in order to help in governance is the process by which teachers will help make decisions. A restructued school must include teachers in the decision making; however, this restructued school must operate as a collaborative system for achieving intended outcomes. James Guthrie in his article entitled "School-Based Management: The Next Needed Education Reform" published in the December, 1986, issue of Phi Delta Kappan, states that school-based management should become the fundamental decision-making unit within the educational system.[7]

School based management develops a sense of pride as well as a sense of ownership in the decision-making process. When pride in ownership has been achieved, accountabilty and responsibility follow. This allows staff an opportunity to have increased input in

decisions and to actually be involved in making many decisions that influence individual buildings in regard to educational outcomes.

Involvement leads to improved morale and better understanding of cause-effect relationships of the school environment. The end result is that there is a focused point of accountability for decisions. In the application of teaming, teachers have been empowered to develop and evaluate annual action plans for individual buildings. Teaming is a people-oriented philosophy which gives staff members authority, responsibility and ownership.

Goal Definition

Schools have, and always have had, a role to play in developing the whole child, not only the academic realm of a child's growth and development. Schools need to identify and move resources to define and support teacher, school and district level priorities. These goals give meaning to education in response to national, state and local demands. Education as a national resource with rewards, incentives, and outcomes has to be given attention by those who make decisions in regard to education.

The educational delivery system must be responsive to forces--social and economic--that depend upon the success of education. The difference in goal identification during this reform movement has to be that schools and communities will identify their own standards in context to national, state and local needs. Priorties within a school are identified and implemented at the local school level. Resources are organized to achieve priorities based upon local participation. The state education department has not given up its role in defining its needs and goals for school districts. It has, however, gained 730 "partners" in formulating educational goals through the local school districts. Goal identification is not a new idea in education. It has encompassed the focus and direction provided by the mission statements, philosophies and standards in many typical school systems. The curriculum of schools is the belief system of society--and always has been. Goal identification within the local school district becomes an examination of the assumptions and commitments to the beliefs and values of a culture and society school-by-school and district-by-district. It is the essence of what schools must do to bring about an education for children whether or not there is agreement with one's own value system. It becomes locally generated and locally owned. It also is responsive to change at the local level. As schools and communities evolve, goals change and evolve.

The Art of Managing Incremental Change

Managing incremental change is an ongoing process of continuous involvement of people--teachers, administrators, board members, parents, non-instructional staff members and students--within the entire school system. In his book Thriving on Chaos, Tom Peters states that "the most efficient and effective route to bold change is the participation of everyone, every day, in incremental change. Most bold change is the result of a hundred thousand tiny changes that culminate in a bold procedure or structure.[8] The management of this incremental change, however draws upon the skills and abilities of those with a vested interest in carrying out the change. It is the reconfiguration of the bureaucratic alignments. It is, more specifically, the political, cultural, and individual belief systems of the affected school personnel that these changes are played out. It is through continuous effort that school constituents will participate, rather than react to, change.

Incremental change is evident within any organization. It is when change becomes an expectation that positions and beliefs are formed--against or for the new process. Political support must be solicited from significant stake holders. The climate may sink under the load of naysayers and doomsdayers. Technical support may be seen as too little and, therefore, implemented improperly leaving those who knew to say, "I told you so."

The design and construction of change in a school is the antithesis of a plodding organization. Bureaucracy has become synonymous with bottle necked decision making and lack of inertia to generate or move organizations to new levels of performance. This was not how men were organized to function in the bureaucratic system. In this century the drive for efficiency in organizations led Max Weber (1864-1920), a German academician, to analyze the working of organizations--especially bureaucracy

> The essence of Weber's model of bureaucracy is a hierarchy of offices where the duties are clearly codified by rules and regulations . . . Weber felt that the bureaucratic arrangement was superior to other forms because it had more precision and speed, and reduced both material and personal costs. Part of his reasoning for the efficacy of bureaucracy was its superior discipline and control of role performance, for he specifically stated that if officials were elected instead of appointed, discipline and control would be weakened. The high formalization of offices or jobs results in the development of expertise in a limited area and therefore greater efficiency in performance with fewer errors being made.[9]

Schools have not been able to respond to the centralization and formalization of rules and coordination the way Weber envisioned the workings of a bureaucracy. Schools have been successful, however, in maintaining the status quo:

> Many people have a feeling of powerlessness, of alienation, and they respond with various kinds of behavior. Some are able to manipulate the organization sufficiently well to achieve important aims of their own. Others submit to bureaucratic standards of achievement and find bureaucracy a natural and comfortable habitat. Whatever the form of adjustment, behavior patterns and character types emerge which are bureaucratically conditioned to some important extent. Modern man is becoming bureaucratic man, or, as he has been called, an 'Organization Man.[10]

Managing incremental change is the marshalling of resources, knowledge, communication and people committed to the change focused in the same direction. It takes an understanding of the bureaucracy, experience, communication, technical skill, intuition and luck, perhaps, to move the organization from what is known to the unknown. This ability to move the organization in a focused direction can be described as the art of managing incremental change.

Considerations for Change

It is in the day-to-day process of dealing with teachers, superintendents, principals, parents, board members, administrators and children that the full impact of the Excellence and Accountability components are measured and evaluated. It is through the implementation of the specific organizational change variables the schools and school districts will begin to alter their structure for improving the educational system. Through the active participation of the stake holders in our schools the bureaucracy will realize its potential for educational improvement.

As a practical matter, where does a school board, a superintendent, principal or teacher begin to look toward moving a building or school system toward excellence and accountability? There is no recipe for change, but there are considerations:

1. A school district, and individual schools within the district, should utilize a definite process in implementing a project. The Gouverneur Central School District initiated an effective schools project based upon effective schools research. The effective schools model structured the process of change.

2.The use of an outside facilitator who is experienced and familiar with the model being implemented is absolutely essential to the success of the project.

3.Planned awareness sessions should be made available for the Board of Education, administration, building principals, faculty and parents.

4.Organizational teams should be trained in the art of communication, group interaction, and group processing. This holds true for district and building level teams.

5.Time must be provided for teams to plan and work together. Staff development and training is an integral element in understanding what and how the "old" school is being reformulated into the "new" school. Time must be taken during the school year or through in-service during the summer. Whatever the choice, it is clear that this time is above and beyond normal teaching duties.

6.Financial support from the Board of Education, with monies built into the school budget, is a requirement for the success of the project.

7.Empowerment requires leaders, at the district and building level, to provide information and resources to others (which means sharing power since information equates to power).

Summary

What seems evident is that the educational researchers, politicians, superintendents, principals, teachers, board members and communities have agreed that it is time to realign the structure of schools. For some, the need was clear long before now. For some, the need is still not as clear. However, there is deep concern that schools do not succeed as they should from all corners of the educational map. All are converging upon the same conclusion--schools need to restructure in order to improve student achievement.

The Gouverneur Central School District believes that moving decision making closer to the learning of the child will improve educational outcomes. However, there are no guarantees for success if a school embarks upon this model of planned change. It is for the accountability aspect of the Excellence and Accountability Program to support the models of school district programs that deliver the desired outcomes.

However, if a school district can clear the initial hurdles that might preclude setting in motion the wheels of change, there are common characteristics, found in real schools, that create improved learning environments for children. Those school districts that have identified their educational goals will have begun the process of restructuring their schools. Those school districts that have pointed toward achieving those goals through visionary leadership, organizational teaming and management of incremental change will succeed in the education of children.

Footnotes

1. Noel M. Tichy, Managing Strategic Change, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1983), p. 332.

2. Theodore Sizer, "Common Sense," Educational Leadership, March 1985, pp. 21-22.

3. L.M. McNeil, "Contradictions of Control, Part 1: Administrators and Teachers," Phi Delta Kappan, January 1988, pp. 333-339.

4. Leslie Huling-Austin, Suzanne Stiegelbauer, Deborah Muscella, "High School Principals: Their Role in Guiding Change," (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, 1985).

5. Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders, (New York: Harper Row, 1985), p. 80

6 . Generally described in Excellence In Education Newsletter Managing School People More Creatively in "How One School District Empowered Its Teachers," The Institute for Advancing Educational Management, P.O. Box 948, Westbury, New York.

7. James W. Guthrie, "School-Based Management-The Next Needed Education Refrom," Phi Delta Kappan, December 1986, pp. 305-309.

8. Tom Peters, Thriving On Chaos, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 468.

9 . Jerald Hage, "An Axiomatic Theory of Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, X, 1965 pp. 289-320.

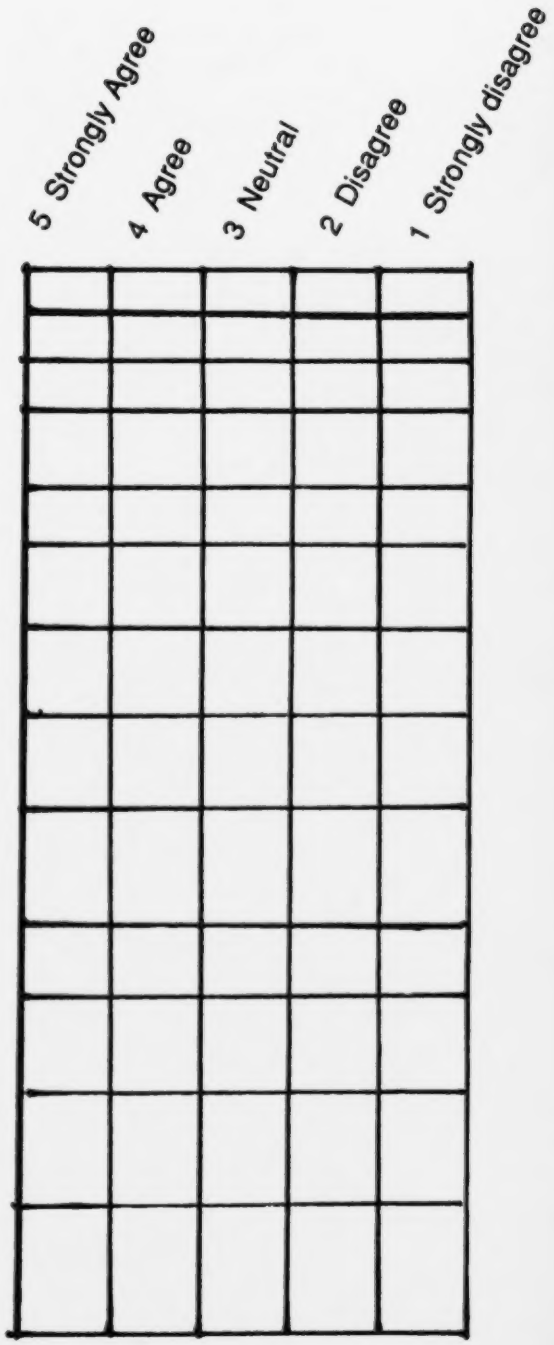
10 . Victor Thompson, Modern Organization, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 4-5.

WHAT'S YOUR C.Q.?

DIRECTIONS: Determine your own Change Quotient (CQ) by rating each statement below using the scale of 1 - 5.

5. Strongly Agree
4. Agree
3. Neutral
2. Disagree
1. Strongly Disagree

1. Change is a process, not an event.
2. Individuals change; not institutions.
3. People respond to change differently.
4. Change progresses through a set of common stages, experienced by all.
5. Change takes time.
6. Problems should be solved at the lowest level within the organization.
7. Teachers know the problems in schools best.
8. Real change requires the restructuring of the school bureaucracy and the people in it.
9. Administration must, through words and actions, make school-level improvement occur by empowering teachers.
10. The role of the leader is that of a change facilitator.
11. A restructured school must include teachers in the decision making process.
12. The restructured school must function as a collaborative system for achieving intended outcomes.
13. Staff must/should become involved in making many decisions at the building level which influence learner outcomes.



	5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neutral	2 Disagree	1 Strongly disagree
14. Priorities should be identified and implemented at the local school or building level.					
15. Most bold change is the result of a hundred thousand tiny changes . . .					
16. A sense of pride and ownership can be achieved through school-based management.					
17. Change requires resources, knowledge, experience, communicating, technical skill, intuition, and luck.					
18. A definite process or plan should be laid out before embarking on a "ship called change".					
19. All the critical players - BOE, administration, teachers, community - must be aware of and support the plan.					
20. Empowerment requires leaders to provide information and resources, including time and team training.					
SUB-TOTAL	____	____	____	____	____

GRAND TOTAL _____

CQ RATING SCALE INTERPRETATION

90-100 Congratulations! You are a full fledged Change Czar - able to leap tall hierarchies, stop rampant bandwagons, and dodge naysayers' bullets.

80-89 You've been transformed into a Prince! Enlightened by the lovely Princess of Change, you've lost your toad-like warts and are ready to be crowned "Change Agent".

70-79 You must be from Missouri - the "show me" state. Stop waiting for proof and believe in the power of people to work together for a common goal.

Below 69 About the only changes you're ready for are diapers and tires! Perhaps you ought to rethink your involvement in the change process.